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AUTHOR Weisz, Vera C.
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ABSTRACT

Project HIRE is a special program conducted by Middlesex Community College since October 1978 to help people 55 years of age and older find paid employment. The specific goals of the project, as it was originally conceived, were to: (1) open three intake centers; (2) register clients at the centers; (3) provide career counseling; (4) offer workshops in writing resumes and job-seeking skills; (5) locate jobs for clients; (6) place clients; (7) act as an advocate for the rights of older citizens; (8) publicize the project in area media; (9) maintain records and prepare monthly reports; (10) provide the community with a bank of skilled workers; and (11) utilize interns and volunteers. After initial publicity efforts, which included media coverage and mailings to area employers and service agencies, client interview and job matching processes were developed which eventually placed 106 clients in jobs ranging in pay from $3.10 to $5.00 an hour. In all, 390 older adults were added to the active client file, 1,460 employers were contacted, 409 jobs were developed, and 17 people were registered in the skills bank. The project was encumbered by the occasional imbalance between job applicants and openings, the lack of jobs sufficiently interesting and remunerative, and the time-consuming nature of client follow-up. The project now operates with a greatly reduced staff and has therefore eliminated its counseling component and restricted intake, matching and follow-up activities. (JP)

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PROJECT FIRE

by: Vera C. Weisz

Middlesex Community College
Bedford, Massachusetts 01730

JC 810 030

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OUTLINE OF PROJECT HIRE

I. Development of Project HIRE
   - A. Proposal to Minuteman Home Care
   - B. Funding

II. Description of Program
   - A. Help people 55 and over find paid employment
   - B. Provide counseling
   - C. Staff

III. Inter-agency Cooperation
   - A. Minuteman Home Care
   - B. Department of Elder Affairs
   - C. Councils on Aging

IV. Results
   - A. Expected and Actual Results
   - B. Discrepancies

V. Campus Report

VI. Problems and Solutions

VII. Update

REPORT FOR WASHINGTON

Project HIRE is a project at Middlesex Community College, Bedford, Mass. to help people 55 and over find paid employment. It was originally funded by Minuteman Home Care of Lexington through December 31, 1979, then extended to September 1980. It serves the 16 northwest suburban communities.

A proposal was written and submitted by the former Director of Community Services, Middlesex Community College to Minuteman Home Care, the area agency for elderly home care in the summer of 1978. The budget was funded for 15 months with Title III funds, $14,495 for the first twelve months and $3,877 for the three additional months with in-kind contributions of Middlesex Community College. Funding for Project HIRE currently is $15,000 from December 31, 1979 thru September 1980. An additional $500 was received from Polaroid Corp.

Through news releases, calls and brochures a large network was established between Project HIRE at Middlesex Community College and Minuteman Home Care, Councils on Aging, Department of Elder Affairs, Older Workers' Network, Veteran's Organizations, Newton and Medford CETAS and many job referral and service agencies.

The advisory council to HIRE were members already involved through the Gerontology Department.

Population to be served were people 55 and over in the sixteen northwest communities of the Greater Boston area.

Some of the main goals were:

1. Open three intake centers.
2. Register clients at centers.
3. Counsel clients at centers.
4. Offer resume writing and job seeking skills workshops
5. Develop jobs

6. Place clients in jobs
7. Advocate for rights of older Americans
8. Publicize Project HIRE in area and Boston papers, TV and radio
9. Maintain records and provide monthly and quarterly reports
10. Build skills bank
11. Use interns and volunteers.

Project Hire has three intake centers, one in the Council on Aging in Burlington, one in the Council on Aging in Arlington and the central one at Middlesex Community College, Community Services. Open houses were held at the Arlington and Burlington Centers to stimulate community interest, recruit applicants and find employment.

A two-page letter and form on job availability was sent to over 300 employers, and their replies indicated that they had jobs-full and part-time.

One hundred brochures on Project HIRE were distributed on Oct. 26, 1979 at the Park Plaza meeting on the "Older Worker".

Volunteers called and were utilized to help in intake and job development.

Letters and brochures were also sent to churches, Chambers of Commerce, Kiwanis and Rotary Clubs, the Older American, A.A.R.P., Channel 7 and a host of other resources.

The staff consisted of the Project Director, a part-time secretary, a very part-time counselor, three senior aides paid by Minuteman Home Care for 20 hours each week, and volunteers and/or interns who assisted in job development, outreach, referrals and follow-up. The senior aides were orientated by the Director of Project HIRE. They interviewed applicants, assisted in job matching, referral and follow-up and contacted employers.

An intake and matching process was developed, revised and constantly improved. It included tabbing applicants' interview

forms and index cards with level of skill coding tabs. It also included coding job orders and cards to facilitate easier matching. All copies of job orders were sent to the other Intake Centers. Applicants and job orders were labeled in books to be reviewed and matched easier.

Project HIRE is a part of the Older Employment Network, and through publicity and the media has established relationships with service and employment agencies throughout Massachusetts. Therefore, clients who do not live in the appropriate vicinity are referred to other agencies.

On June 6, 1979 Project HIRE staff presented workshops on Career Development to a large audience at a local elderly conference. This added to recruitment. A "Hall of Fame" presentation was made to an employer who had hired several HIRE applicants.

The Director spent time speaking to personnel managers, pre-retirement groups, Golden Age Clubs and working with SCORE, an organization to place older workers.

Jobs came in from the public and private sector and are: clerical, assembly line, homemakers, sales people, drivers, teachers' aides, bookkeepers, carpenters, technicians skilled and non-skilled. Most of the jobs are part-time and pay from $3.10 to $5.00 hourly. The average pay is roughly $3.50 an hour. In addition a small skills and crafts bank of workers has been built.

Applicants received career counseling, supportive counseling and help with all available resources. They were often referred to other kinds of programs for re-training.

Often transportation was and is an obstacle to their employment.

The part-time counselor visited with all the intake centers and met with clients who needed special help in job seeking.

There is always a tremendous amount of work to be done in job development and getting commitments from businesses to hire older workers on every skill level.

Project HIRE advocates different job models such as two part-time people for one, job sharing, flexi-time etc. to employers and personnel people.

Project HIRE received good publicity from all the local newspapers, the Boston Herald, Channel 7, Woman 79, most of the radio stations, the Association of Junior Colleges, Aging News, Active Times, Gerontopics and the Department of Labor.

Inquiries from over 35 agencies and institutions of higher education throughout the country have been received by Project HIRE to date.

Recruiting applicants and developing jobs were the initial primary tasks. One on-going task was to keep the numbers of applicants and job orders balanced. Sometimes jobs were scarce; sometimes applicants were scarce, producing a continuous see-saw effect. Recruiting of applicants was much more difficult than in urban areas-re: Sharon King Show--- many calls came in from urban areas and other parts of the state as a result of the Director's appearance on the Sharon King Television program. People were referred to other agencies.

Another challenge was to find jobs that were interesting, renumerative and complex enough for the high calibre and experiences of many of the applicants.

Follow-up on job status of applicants and employers after referrals were made was a time consuming process.

Job development, recruiting, job matching, counseling, public relations, follow-up and advocacy were all handled by a very limited part-time staff. This was often overwhelming and created a lag.

Sometimes clients did not show up for job interviews and received extra counseling to discuss their reasons. Very often clients did not call the center to report whether or not they had been hired. The problems were often health, transportation, lack of confidence or confusion. This necessitated sending out a follow-up form regularly to job applicants to check on their employment status and interest.

Facts and Figures

	Expected Results	Actually Accomplished
1. Elders added to active client files		390
2. Total job referrals made		995
3. Total elders placed in jobs	150	106
4. Individual counseling visits		146
5. Group counseling visits		24
6. Employers contacted	4000	1460
7. Jobs added to files (new jobs developed)	300	409
8. People registered in skills bank		17

Currently Project HIRE has a restructured staff with a very part-time coordinator, a part-time job developer, a part-time recruiter, a part-time secretary and two part-time senior aides. Emphasis has been placed on recruiting Homemaker-Home-Health Aides. There is no longer a counseling component in the Project, and intake, matching and follow-up is being done in a limited way.

The Director recommended that strong relations between Project HIRE and other agencies such as Department of Labor, Department of Occupational Education, HUD, and local agencies be developed for continued funding. A great deal of time need be spent coordinating these efforts. Another recommendation was that the Project budget be controlled and administered by the Director in order to facilitate activities in the Project.

In conclusion, it is very clear that work opportunities for older adults have increased.

Project HIRE staff feels that some of the most essential ingredients for a successful program are tremendous media publicity and advertising, a deep commitment to the older person and enough money and freedom to be able to cut through traditional red tape and budgetary prodecures which impede the program.

"In order to encourage older people to take risks, a project staff must be willing to demonstrate confident, assertive and innovative behavior, and have fun doing it with their clients."

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